

Chapter 4: Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC)

Introduction SOC is a consortium of national education associations and about 1,800 regionally accredited colleges and universities specifically pledged to ease the difficulties of servicemembers seeking a postsecondary education. SOC is the umbrella organization out of which the various networks are developed. More information is available at <http://www.soc.aascu.org>.

Reference The primary reference for SOC is the SOC Guide (Volumes I & II). The Guide is available to all education centers through DAN TES. See the Chapter on DAN TES for ordering information. Information on SOCCOAST is contained in the SOCCOAST Handbooks (Vol 2 and 4). A CDROM containing the catalogs is available from the CG Institute. The Handbooks may be downloaded from the SOC homepage at <http://www.soc.aascu.org>. Brochures and posters on SOCCOAST are available from SOC. The primary reference for SOCCOAST Afloat is the SOCCOAST Afloat Catalog available from the CG Institute. ESOs are encouraged to reproduce the SOCCOAST Checklist for Students provided as Figure 5-1 to provide to interested students.

SOC Guide There is frequently a wide variance in the credit acceptance policies of institutions. SOC institutions are no different. Members should be counseled to be smart consumers of education and to review institutional policies on the acceptance of non-traditional education prior to enrollment.

The SOC Guide provides detailed information on each member institution's policies on the acceptance of non-traditional education. Some of the information provided is:

* Credit awarded for the CLEP General Examinations, the CLEP Subjects, DSSTs, and Excelsior Exams.

* Credit awarded for ACE Guide recommended credit (separated by training courses and rates).

When reviewing the entries, note the scores required on the tests. If they are significantly higher than the ACE credit recommendation, the member might be advised to consider other institutions.

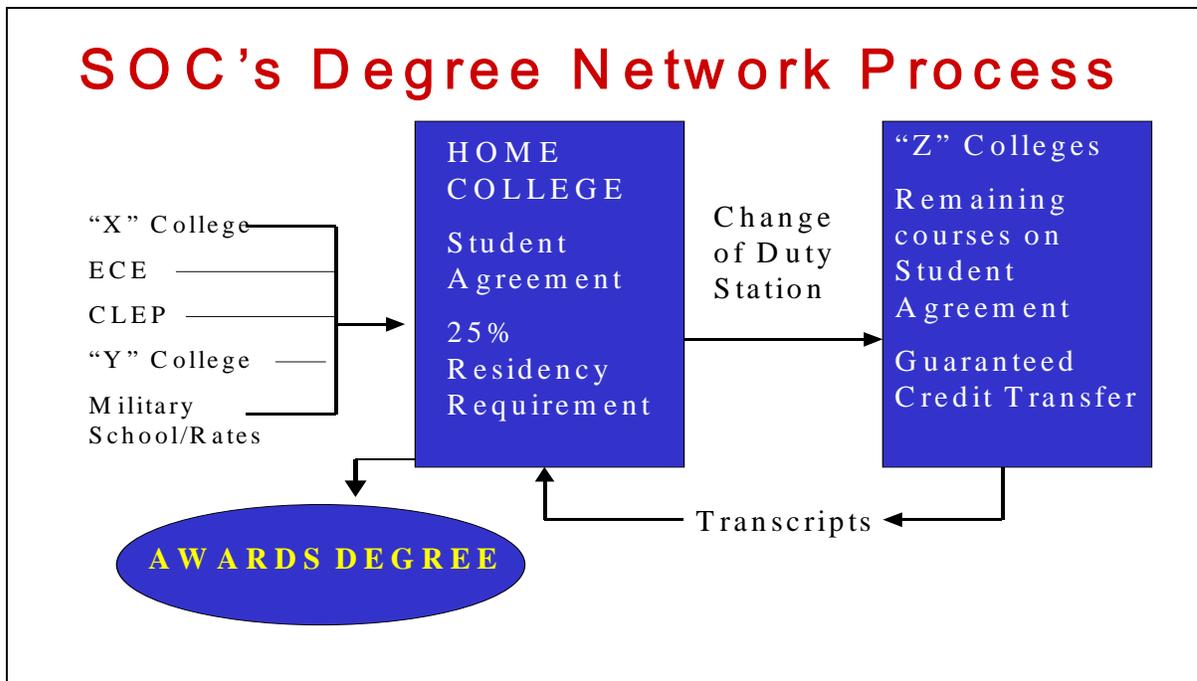
Continued on next page.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC)

SOCCOAST

Currently, about 100 SOC colleges and universities have signed agreements to join SOCCOAST. Seventy-five of these institutions are networked in SOCCOAST-2 (associate degree programs) and 53 of these institutions are networked in SOCCOAST-4 (baccalaureate degree programs). Each of the SOCCOAST institutions has agreed to:

- Serve as a home college for Coast Guard personnel and their adult family members
- Limit academic residency to no more than 25 percent of the degree program.
- Issue SOCCOAST Student Agreements to personnel who complete six hours of course work with that college, if not sooner.
- Award appropriate credit as recommended by ACE for standardized tests, military schools and occupational experiences as applicable toward specific degree requirements.
- Permit students to complete their academic programs under the terms of the agreement even after leaving military service.
- Grant guaranteed transferability for all courses mapped in the subject network.
- Accept general education courses without prior approval from other network



Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) (continued)

SOCOAST Student Agreement

The SOCCOAST Student Agreement is the official evaluation by a home college of a student's prior education and experience. The Student Agreement gives the student a degree plan detailing the courses and other requirements needed to complete the degree. The Student Agreement is a contract-for-degree made by the home college guaranteeing that the degree will be awarded when all the requirements have been met. The SOCCOAST Student Agreement form is shown as Figure 4-2-1.

To aid the institution in completing the official evaluation, students shall request an official USCG registered transcript. The transcript will allow the institution to award maximum credit for the military learning experiences. To request an official USCG transcript, see Chapter 1 on Documenting Military Learning Experiences.

Transferability

The Transferability Tables are the key in transferring credit. The Transferability Tables, organized by SOC Course Category, show which courses each institution has guaranteed to accept in transfer as a substitute for its specific course (or courses) in the category. For example, the course entry below is taken from a curriculum exhibit:

MG001B	MG 101	Introduction to Management
--------	--------	-------------------------------

"MG001B" is the SOC Course Category number.

MG 101 refers to the course prefix or course number.

The Transferability Tables are located in Section 5 of the SOCCOAST Handbooks.

Continued on next page.

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) (continued)

Transferability (continued)

When students are unable to take a course required for a degree at their home college, and need to know what course they may take that is guaranteed to transfer back to their home college in place of that specific course, follow the steps below:

Find the course number of the required course on the Student Agreement Form provided by the home college. Now refer to the SOCCOAST Handbook.

4. Look for the course number in the home college's Course Index in Section 5. If the course is found, note its SOC Course Category Code. If the course is not found, proceed to step 7.
5. Locate the heading for the course's SOC Course Category in the Transferability Tables.
6. Under that category in the Transferability Tables, locate the required course from the home college. Check that the course title listed matches the one on the Student Agreement. If the course title does not match, contact the home college to determine whether the transfer guarantees still apply for the required course, or if other course substitution is available.
7. Review the current courses listed in that category from all the other institutions where the student may take a substitute course. These courses are guaranteed to transfer to the home college's required course in the category without prior approval.
8. Pay special attention to any "AND/OR" information listed in the transferability tables.
9. If there is no SOC Category Code listed for a required course, or all entries in the SOC Transferability Tables in Section 5, SOCCOAST Handbook, have a "Before Date," there is no guaranteed transferability articulated from other SOC degree network institutions. In this instance, students are advised to take that course at the home college if possible. If the course cannot be taken there, students should obtain prior approval from the home college for a transfer before taking an apparently comparable course at another college. Use the Course Approval Form in Section 3 of the SOCCOAST Handbook.

Graduation

Procedures for graduation may vary slightly by institution. Students usually need to file a graduation request or application with the home college after completing all degree requirements.

End of Section

Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) (continued)

SOCOCOAST AFLOAT

SOCOCOAST Afloat Overview

SOCOCOAST Afloat is designed to aid those personnel deployed on a cutter to continue their education while underway. A small group of dedicated college partners have agreed to provide courses on CDROM to support the shipboard community. Participating SOCOCOAST institutions will loan a laptop computer to shipboard ESOs when at least 5 students are enrolled from the ship.

The partnership institutions are members of SOCOCOAST. All the conditions and criterion of SOCOCOAST institutions apply to the Afloat program. This college network ensures the guaranteed transferability of college credit and the award of credit for military schools and occupational experiences. The SOCOCOAST Afloat network will allow continuation of the member's degree plan regardless of duty assignment.

Steps on Getting Started

Step	Action
1	Survey shipboard personnel to determine interest and desired courses/programs.
2	Contact the college to receive the following items: *Class Schedule *Registration information *Catalog of Degree Programs – SOCOCOAST Afloat
3	Review the SOCOCOAST Afloat catalog which is available on the CGI website.
4	Register students. Note the class start and end dates provided in the school's registration information. All students enrolling with the school from a specific ship should have the same enrolment date for the semester.
5	Request Tuition Assistance. All students should complete the Request for Tuition Assistance Form (CG 4147). ESO shall review the TA forms for accuracy. When forwarding the requests to the CGI for processing, include a cover memo listing the names of the students and request batch processing and expeditious return of the TA authorization for SOCOCOAST Afloat enrollment. If authorization forms are not received within 10 working days, call the TA Hotline at 1-888-532-8257. Current TA policies and caps apply to courses taken through SOCOCOAST Afloat.
6	When the TA authorization forms are received, make a copy of the authorization(s) for your records. Forward the original authorizations and the registration forms to the appropriate college along with CGI Form 1560/11, SOCOCOAST Afloat Unit Enrollment Form (see Figure 6-7). The unit enrollment form is a cover letter the school certifying that the ESO will be responsible for proctoring the exams and maintaining security of the laptop (if provided).
7	Advise students to order the textbooks. On-line ordering is available from the institutions via their web site.
8	Ensure course materials are received prior to deployment. All tests will be sent to the ESO for safe keeping until the member(s) is ready to take the test. ESOs will ensure the exam is proctored in a secure environment and returned to the colleges as expeditiously as possible.
10	Class completion. Return the tests to the institution. Some of the bookstores will also buy back the textbooks from students. Interested students should be advised to contact the bookstore directly.
11.	Institution loaned laptops. Prior to returning a laptop loaned by the school, survey the crew to determine interest in taking classes during the next term. If 5 people indicate interest in enrolling with the institution, retain the laptop, secure it, and start using it when the course materials arrive. If there is no interest in taking classes the next term, return the school's laptop via DHL and insure the package for \$1,200.

SOCOCOAST CHECKLIST for STUDENTS

What do you want to study? Only you can make that decision. You don't have to decide immediately. There are certain core classes that are required for all degree programs. So, what are you waiting for?

Plan ahead. There are a number of things to do before you enroll in a class.

- ❑ *Application for Voluntary Education Services* needs to be submitted by you to the Institute. This action could save you time and money by applying the credits you've gained from your military experience to your degree plan. If your degree is related to your USCG rate, more of your military credit may be applicable to your degree program. The more time in the USCG, the more credit you should have.

Go to the Education Center (EC) at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/ve/ve.asp> to view an unofficial copy of your military transcript. Select the "Student Login" at bottom of page. If the information is incorrect, submit a completed [CGI 1561](#) to update your education record.

- ❑ *Research colleges and degree programs.*
 1. Determine which colleges are accessible to you. Go to the SOCOCOAST homepage at <http://www.soc.aascu.org/sococoast/Default.html> and review the *SOCOCOAST Handbooks*. Look in Section 6 where USCG personnel can access various program options. If there is not a college in your geographic area, review "All sites, Distance Learning." You can take courses from the institutions listed there no matter where you are located.
 2. Also, review the list of college and degrees for which automated degree planning is available through the CG Institute. You will find a listing of the institutions on the VEC. These institutions are also SOCOCOAST institutions.
 3. Get more information on the colleges that interest you. Go to their homepage or order their catalog.
 4. Most colleges have a college orientation course (career lab) that will provide a forum for you to learn about various degree programs and vocations. Many provide interest inventories and aptitude tests that may help you determine what field of study would be right for you. Your ESO may also be able to help you with this.
 5. Visit the college if possible. You can usually do a virtual tour if an on-site tour is not possible.

Enroll with the college of your choice. This institution (if it is a SOCOCOAST institution) will become your **home school**.

- ❑ Select class. Recommend starting with the basic general educational courses required for most degrees (i.e., English Composition, Humanities, Social Science/History, Math, and Natural Science).
- ❑ Apply for Tuition Assistance (TA). Submit [CG 4147](#) to the Institute for approval. Form is available on the homepage or from your ESO.

Continued on next page

CHECKLIST for STUDENTS (continued)

1. When the Tuition Assistance Authorization form is received, proceed to enroll in the desired course.
 2. Complete class and ensure grade report is provided to NETPTDC as directed on the TA Authorization Form.
- Select another course, request TA, and start the next term.

Obtain Student Agreement. When you have completed **six** semester hours with the institution, request an official student agreement. Some schools provide the agreements automatically but don't hesitate to ask if the agreement is not provided. All schools accept prior learning assessments. Some colleges (Excelsior College, Thomas Edison State College, Charter Oak State College, and the University of Phoenix (associate) have some residency requirements. Through SOCCOAST no more than 25 percent of the degree program has to be completed through your home school. Courses that you take at a distance from the home school count toward the residency requirements.

- Be sure and complete the residency requirement of the institution as soon as possible.
- When transferred to a new duty station arrange to meet with the ESO at your new unit and take a copy of your student agreement form. The ESO will advise on college/course availability at your new unit. If the ESO is not available, call the SOC Helpline at 1-800-368-5622 or email soccoast@aascu.org.
- Send transcripts of courses completed at other network institutions to the home college on a quarterly basis.
- Apply for graduation from the home college when all degree requirements have been met.

Financial Support. There are a number of funding sources of which you should be aware.

- USCG Tuition Assistance (TA) available to all active duty, reservists, and civilian employees of the USCG. . See the Institute website at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/cfa/ta.asp> for more information.
- MGIB and MGIB TopUP. If eligible for MGIB, you may use it in lieu of TA if desired. The MGIB TopUP may be used in conjunction with TA to pay fees not paid by the USCG as well as any tuition not paid by the USCG. Contact the VA Representative at your school or visit the VA website at www.gibill.va.gov.
- USCG Foundation Grant. Active duty enlisted personnel (E-3 through E-9) are eligible for up to \$350 per year to offset educational expenses. The grant may be used for tuition, fees, books, etc. See the Institute website at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/cgi/cfa/fg.asp> for more information.
- USCG Mutual Assistance. Active Duty Supplemental Education Grant (ADSEG) may also be used to offset education expenses for the first undergraduate degree. Check their website at <http://www.cgmahq.org> for additional information.
- FAFSA Application (US Dept of Education). Application available at most colleges and on the DANTES homepage at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/forms.jsp>
- Scholarship Searches see your ESO or the Institute homepage.



SOCCOAST AFLOAT

COLLEGE PARTNERS

All partner institutions offer complete degree programs on CDROM. The institutions are also part of the SOCCOAST network thereby guaranteeing transferability of courses. The institutions will loan one laptop to any USCG ship that has five members participating in courses. The ESO is responsible for securing the laptop and checking it in-and-out to students as required.

Coastline Community College

SOCCOAST Afloat Coordinator

11460 Warner Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Phone: toll free (866) 422-2645

Fax: 714-241-6324

Web site: <http://mil.ccc.cccd.edu>

Email: coastguard@ccc.edu

Coastline Community College:

Can award up to 40 semester hours for military training and experience, CLEP, DANTES SSTs, etc.

Has an academic residency requirement of 12 semester hours (four courses)

Degrees transfer fully into several 4-year colleges' bachelor's degree programs, including those of Fort Hays State University, Governors State University and Excelsior College

Offers up-front evaluation of Coast Guard Transcript. Fax it to 714-241-6324

Excelsior College

Assistant Dean, Military Education & Outreach

7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203-5159

Phone: 518-464-8500X135

888-647-2388X135

Fax: 588-464-8777

Web site: <http://www.excelsior.edu/uscg/>

Email: military@excelsior.edu

Excelsior College:

Associate degrees from Coastline Community College and Florida Community College at Jacksonville can transfer fully.

Can award up to the full degree based on military and experience, CLEP, DANTES SSTs, Excelsior College Exams and other forms of non-traditional learning

Has no academic residency requirement.

Continued on next page

Florida Community College at Jacksonville

Enrollment Service Coordinator

Military Education Institute

Florida Community College at Jacksonville

601 West State St., Jacksonville, FL 32202

Phone: 904-632-5056

Fax: 904-632-5053

Web site: <http://www.fccj.edu/uscg/>

E-mail: military@fccj.edu

Florida Community College at Jacksonville:

can award up to 45 semester hours for military training and experience, CLEP, DANTES SSTs, etc.

has an academic residency requirement of 25%

degrees can transfer fully into several 4-year including colleges' bachelor's degree programs those at Fort Hays State University

offers up-front evaluation of Coast Guard Transcript. Call 877-633-5950 and ask about the Evaluation of Military Credit

Fort Hays State University

Military Liaison, Virtual College

600 Park St., Hays, KS 67601-4099

Phone: (785) 628-4291

Web site: <http://www.fhsu.edu/virtualcollege/>

Email: virtualcollege@fhsu.edu

Fort Hays State University:

provides personal advising and Coast Guard transcript analysis. Use FAX number 785-628-4085.

awards credit based on DANTES SSTs, CLEP, and ACE recommendations

can transfer in up to 64 hours of military credit

has an academic residency requirement of 30 semester hours

provides toll-free phone and Internet support, virtual bookstore, online library resources

offers Career Services

offers main courses for other degree programs including business, education, healthcare, and several disciplines in the arts and sciences.

Governors State University

SOCCOAST Program Manager

BOG Program, University Park, IL 60466

Phone: 708-534-4092

800-478-8478X4092

Fax: 708-534-1645

Web site: <http://www.govst.edu>

Email: bog@govs.edu

Governors State University is an upper division only institution and has 100 % transfer students. The BOG program specializes in helping students complete their bachelor's degree with approximately 30% of students studying at a distance. Transcripts from previous institutions will be evaluated by a BOQ advisor to assure maximum transfer of credits.

The Board of Governors BA:

- allows transfer of up to 80 semester hours of lower division credit
- accepts complete transfer from Coastline Community College and Florida Community College at Jacksonville as well as most other community college credits
- enables flexible and efficient preparation for graduate studies
- accepts maximum use of military, DANTES, CLEP and other forms of non-traditional learning utilizing options for evaluation of life experiences as college credit
- minimum residency of 24 GSU hours obtainable entirely through distance learning course work
- individual advising support for distance learner by e-mail or through use of 800 phone number

Continued on next page

Old Dominion University

SOCCOAST Coordinator

5215 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk VA 23529

Phone: 1-757-683-6265

Web site: <http://www.odu.edu>

Email:

Old Dominion University:

- provides instruction from internationally known ODU faculty and distinguished scholars.
- offers courses and degrees recognized nationally and internationally
- awards credit for some CLEP, DSSTs, PEP, and ECE exams
- accepts military experience based on ACE recommendations

University of Oklahoma

Center for Independent and Distance Learning

SOCCOAST Afloat Coordinator

1600 Jenkins, Norman, OK 73072

Phone: 1-800-942-5702

Web site: <http://isd.ou.edu/>

Email: coastguard@ou.edu

The University of Oklahoma:

- provides instruction from internationally known OU faculty and distinguished scholars.
- offers courses and degrees recognized nationally and internationally
- awards credit for CLEP, DSSTs, PEP, and ECE exams
- accepts military experience based on ACE recommendations
- requires residency of 30 semester hours for the BLS and 26 semester hours for the MLS

End of Section

Department of
Homeland Security
U.S. Coast Guard Institute
CGI 1568 (01/06)

SOCCOAST Afloat Unit Enrollment Form

To:

- Coastline Community College, 11450 Warner Avenue, Fountain Valley, CA 92708
- Excelsior College, 7 Columbia Circle, Albany, NY 12203-5159
- Florida Community College at Jackson, Urban Resource Center 601 West State St., Jacksonville, FL 32202
- Fort Hays State University, 600 Park Street, Hays, KS 67601-4099
- Governors State University, SOCCOAST Afloat BOG Program, University Park, IL 60466
- Old Dominion University, SOCOAST Coordinator, 5215 Hampton Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23529
- University of Oklahoma, SOCCOAST Afloat Coordinator, 1600 Jenkins, Norman, OK 73072

1. Attached are the registration packages for the students/courses listed below. Registration package should contain Registration Form and TA Authorization Form.

Course Start Date _____ (Course length for all courses – 12 weeks)

Student's Name	Course

From:

Cutter Name: _____
ESO Name: _____

Address (preferably street address, not FPO)

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

My signature below certifies that I agree to proctor all the course exams for the individuals listed above and to maintain security of computer loaned to the unit.

ESO Signature

Date

**THIS FORM, ALL REGISTRATION MATERIALS AND TA AUTHORIZATION FORMS SHOULD BE MAILED
FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE REQUESTED START DATE.**